



COOP/COG FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. What is the difference between Continuity of Operations (COOP) and Emergency Response and Management?

COOP is specific to continuing the operations of your department or agency.

Emergency response is when your department or agency is tasked to devote personnel and resources to an emergency or disaster in the state.

2. Is there a sample of a completed COOP/COG plan that another department has completed?

The COOP/COG Template and Guidance is intended to be a model plan which you can insert your agency's information into. We do not currently have any completed agency plans as they are not due until the end of September. If we had one, we would have to request and receive approval for a redacted copy from that agency in order to make it available.

3. In the Plan Review Checklist in Emergency Plans and Procedures, item number 4, it includes a risk or hazard analysis to identify threats to facilities and operations. Does this require documentation of the mitigation or control measures?

The COOP/COG plan does need to include or reference a risk or hazard analysis to identify threats to facilities and operations. You should already have a risk or hazard analysis in your Departmental Emergency Plan, reference Executive Order W-9-91, 8(c). Addressing mitigation of these threats is inherent in "the protection of personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and vital public records against the destructive forces of nature or man."

4. What level of "Essential Functions" should be included in a COOP/COG Plan?

Each Department has its mission that contributes to the functioning of the state as a whole. Departments should identify those essential functions required to complete their mission both at the departmental level and at the state level. It should include those actions and services required by law where there is a high dependency by customers or clients.



5. If we have identified our essential functions and do not have any that must be resumed within 12 hours, have we met the requirement?

Yes, if you have identified the department's essential functions and their resumption time is beyond 12 hours, as long as you have provisions in place for resuming them within their required period of time, you are compliant.

6. In reference to the information under Lines of Succession/Delegation of Authority on the Plan Review Checklist, are rosters all that are required, or do they need to be in the order of succession?

Each department and agency must have identified lines of succession and delegations of authority as they are required to be included in the Departmental Emergency Plan (See W-9-91, 5) and are also required by the State Emergency Plan (Continuity of Government Section). The checklist references "a roster," however, the list of trained personnel with the authority to perform essential functions and activities may have another name. As long as it meets the intent of the element to have in place a listing of personnel who are trained and have the authority to perform essential functions and activities, then you are compliant. If the successors have been listed in some preferred order of selection, you may want to indicate that in your plan.

7. If a function is not essential then would it be necessary to complete the worksheets for that function?

If a function is not essential then there is no need to complete worksheets for that function. It is for that reason that it is important to identify only those functions that are essential before moving forward with the completion of the rest of the worksheets.

8. Does each division and branch need to have their own COOP/COG plan if their internal function is considered non-essential?

If you are referencing a branch or division within a department as not having an essential function, then they would not need resumption or recovery strategies and would not be prominent in the departments' COOP/COG Plan. However, don't forget that personnel who perform non-essential functions are a resource that can be redirected to assist with essential functions. Divisions and/or branches will not typically have their own COOP/COG Plan unless they are so large that they need one. They would need to develop resumption or recovery strategies specific to their identified essential functions.

9. As a project manager should I attend both 16 hour workshops?

As a project manager it is essential that you understand the scope and goal of the project, so it would be beneficial to you and your committee to attend both Workshop I,



“Program Development and Data Collection Process Workshop” and Workshop II, “Plan Construction and Implementation Workshop.” For more information, please go to www.oes.ca.gov and click on the COOP/COG link on the right side of the page.

10. Should all liaisons, points of contact and operational specialists attend both workshops or just one in particular?

Only key planning personnel need to attend the workshops. Whether or not they attend one or both workshops should be determined by their planning assignment.

11. Should I sign up for both workshops if I feel I have a grasp on the course content and deal with it on a daily basis?

Workshops I and II cover different information and materials but are interrelated in many ways. Workshop I is not only an introductory workshop, but also begins to cover the vital information that will help you to understand the scope of the project. Without Workshop I as a solid stepping stone to grasp key concepts such as the program development, essential functions, risk analysis and more, it may be more difficult to transition to Workshop II and its key concepts. Workshop attendance is not required of state agencies, but is being provided to assist with meeting the Executive Order requirement for COOP/COG planning.

12. What time does the workshop take place, so that my colleagues and I may be prepared in advance?

Workshop I and Workshop II run from 8:30am to 4:00pm.

13. Where in statute does it state that all public employees are disaster service workers?

The California Government Code, Section 3100, establishes public employees as disaster service workers: "It is hereby declared that the protection of the health and safety and preservation of the lives and property of the people of the state from the effects of natural, manmade, or war-caused emergencies which result in conditions of disaster or in extreme peril to life, property, and resources is of paramount state importance requiring the responsible efforts of public and private agencies and individual citizens. In furtherance of the exercise of the police power of the state in protection of its citizens and resources, all public employees are hereby declared to be



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disaster service workers subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law."

Section 3101 of the Government Code provides definitions for the terms "disaster service worker" and "public employees": "For the purpose of this chapter the term "disaster service worker" includes all public employees and all volunteers in any disaster council or emergency organization accredited by the California Emergency Council. The term "public employee" includes all persons employed by the state or any county, city, city and county, state agency or public district, excluding aliens legally employed."

If you have questions about the implications to you, as a public employee, please seek clarification from your agency counsel.

An example of this information can be found in the [Disaster Service Worker Brochure](#) found on the [Contra Costa County Office of Education](#) web site.

14. Are boards and commissions required to meet the 9/30/06 deadline?

Boards and Commissions should do their COOP/COG plans in coordination with the agency or department with which they are associated. Information from Boards and Commissions can be handled much the same as information from divisions and regional offices. If a Board or Commission has essential functions either on a day-to-day basis or during an emergency, it may need to have its own COOP/COG plan. Essential function information from Boards and Commissions may go forward and be included in the associated department or agency's COOP/COG plan. In the event a Board or Commission doesn't have essential functions and is not required to convene during a 30 day period, then a COOP/COG plan may not be necessary and the associated department or agency may submit a disclaimer in place of a COOP/COG Plan.

15. Where in the Emergency Services Act does it reference Continuity of Government?

Continuity of Government is referenced in Article 2, Section 8560 in reference to Emergency Plans and states the following: "Emergency Plans" means those official and approved documents which describe the principles and methods to be applied in carrying out emergency operations or rendering mutual aid during emergencies. These plans include such elements as continuity of government, the emergency services of governmental agencies, mobilization of resources, mutual aid, and public information." The State Emergency Plan provides information on the various elements of continuity of government and how it should be addressed in state agency plans.



16. Our agency created a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) for Y2K. In review, it seems to us that it contains many if not all of the elements required in COOP/COG plans. Why can't we just turn in the BCP for this new requirement?

In many cases, your agency may have existing plans that contain similar elements required in a COOP/COG plan. In this case, it is necessary to review these plans and ensure they meet the criteria established by OES for a COOP/COG plan. To aid in the review of previous plans and their compatibility to COOP/COG, please reference the Plan Review Checklist and Certificate of Completion located on the OES COOP/COG Webpage.

17. How are Lines of Succession different from Delegation of Authority?

The Line of Succession provides a list of those positions, usually at least 3 deep, who will assume an office or key leadership position if the incumbent is unable to carry out their essential duties during an emergency. Delegation of Authority specifies the limits and types of authority that can be assumed by successors. In many cases, statute limits the types of authority that can be delegated to successors. An example of delegated administrative authority could include: limits on check writing, signing contracts, etc. An example of emergency authority could include: COOP/COG Plan activation, disaster relocation, etc.

18. Is the Senior Activation Team different than the SEMS 5 functions group?

Each state agency can name their COOP/COG plan activation team. The Senior Activation Team is merely one of many possible names. Other options include Emergency Relocation Group (ERG) or Crisis Management Team (CMT). The make up of the COOP/COG activation team would also be defined by the state agency, and while it can be modeled after the 5 SEMS functions, it is not required to be.

19. In Section 9 (Logistics) of COOP/COG, should the logistics be included only for the alternative site(s) identified to carry out essential functions?

Yes, Section 9, should contain information on the coordination of logistics for the alternate facility. Examples are the amount of space required, personnel support needs, the type of equipment and interoperable communications will be needed, and vendors who can provide service in the area of the alternate facility.



20. How does the Administrative Order that we signed jointly with OES 2-3 years ago tie in with COOP/COG and Mutual Aid?

The things agreed to in the Administrative Order should be considered when determining your essential functions.

21. Is September 30 the deadline to have our plans approved by the Office of Emergency Services (OES), or is that the deadline to submit our plans to OES?

See Executive Order S-04-06 which indicates that updated plans are due by 9/30/06.

22. Does each agency have a requirement to use SEMS by inserting the agency's Business Continuity/Operational Recovery Plans, into it? If so, should this responsibility reside with the Business Continuity Manager or subject matter experts?

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) was created to be used to standardize emergency response. Since emergencies impacting state agencies can be internal and external, it could be beneficial to use a single management system for both types of response and coordination. In Article 2, Section 2401 of Government Code it states, "SEMS is intended to standardize response to emergencies involving multiple jurisdictions or multiple agencies...State agencies must use SEMS. Local government must use SEMS...in order to be eligible for state funding of response-related personnel costs."

23. We have no essential or critical functions. Our Operational Recovery Plan approved by Employment Training Panel Executive Staff states we can be down for a maximum of 60 days without any adverse consequences to our outside customers. Are we required to prepare a COOP/COG plan and if so at what level?

Some state departments or agencies may determine after a thorough review that they have no essential functions. If this is the case with your department then the Department's Director would submit that information following the appropriate protocol to the agency and ultimately to OES and the Governor's Cabinet.

Just because the department isn't dependant upon information technology systems doesn't necessarily mean that it don't have any essential functions. There may be administrative functions that require some sort of action within a 30 to 60 day period. An in depth review of the departments' mission and statutory responsibilities might be helpful in making a final determination.



24. What is the definition of "resource(s)?" For example, does it include staff and what's the difference between equipment and resources, as mentioned under Alternate Operating Facilities?

The essence of these two elements is that the department or agency has people, equipment, and tools identified that would be required to continue its essential functions. If you refer to Worksheet 3 where the resources required to continue essential functions are identified, these are the types of equipment and resources that could be needed at an alternate facility.

25. What are "considerations" "for the health and safety of relocated employees?"

This section refers to a statement in the Plan Review and Certification Checklist, "Plan addresses considerations for the health and safety of relocated employees." The intent of this statement is that employees that have been asked to respond and operate at an alternate facility are being provided with adequate facilities, such as restrooms and facility security, in addition to being advised of area hotels and restaurants, and any Employee Assistance Programs or Mental Health resources available to them in the alternate facility.

26. Under Protection of Government Resources, how does "pay flexibilities, benefit issues" fit into "Includes procedures for non-COOP/COG staff and non-special categories of employees are identified?"

The section you referenced addresses procedures for dealing with what might also be called non-essential or contract personnel who may be off work for a period of time due to a lack of facilities and equipment (e.g., how temporary leave may affect wages, benefits, and contract requirements while off work).

27. Can you clarify #4 under "Devolution of Command and Control" and #2 under "Reconstitution," and explain how those differ from the other items in those two sections?

The reference under devolution refers to the **transfer** of responsibility and authority for the essential functions to other employees at other facilities. For example, if Headquarters is compromised and does not have the leadership, staff, or resources to carry out their essential functions in the primary facility or an alternate, they may transfer the authority and responsibility for their essential functions to a regional office and its staff. This is different than the second item under reconstitution, where the authority and responsibility for the essential functions have not been transferred, but rather **relocated** to a secondary or alternate facility, as indicated in their COOP/COG Plan. Reconstitution then, is the phased and coordinated return of essential operations back to the primary facility or permanent replacement facility.



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28. What is an example of "Support Activities?"

Some essential functions are able to continue from many locations, while other functions may require Information Technology connections, communications, or specialized equipment that must be serviced. These types of activities would be considered in support of the essential function. - Reference Worksheet #3.
